John Yale (c. 1525–c. 1572)

Origin and Family

Born c. 1525. Died before 1572.

Father: David Lloyd ap Ellis (c. 1487–c. 1570)
Mother: Gwenhwyfar, (c. 1511–c. 1580) daughter of Richard Lloyd ap Robert Lloyd of Llwyn y Maen
Spouse: Elizabeth Mostyn, daughter of Thomas Mostyn ap Richard ap Hywel (c. 1490 – 1558)[1]
Children:[1]

By Elizabeth Mostyn:[1]
1. Thomas Yale, heir to Plas yn Yale; living 1589
2. Jane Yale

By Agnes Lloyd, daughter of John Lloyd:
1. Dr. David Yale (1540–1626)

John Yale, along with his brother Thomas Yale, LL.D., were the first ancestors with the surname of Yale – a surname that has endured for over five centuries.

From Rodney Horace Yale[1]: "John Yale was the eldest son of David Lloyd ap Ellis. He inherited Plas-yn-Yale from his father and was the ancestor of the Yales of Plas-yn-Yale, and also of the Yales of Plas Grono. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Mostyn of Mostyn, County, Flint. By her he had a son and daughter, namely Thomas Yale, who succeeded to Plas-yn-Yale and continued that line of Yales; and Jane Yale, who married Joseph Haynes."

John Yale, also known as John Wynn Ial or simply John Wynn, is called John Yale by his brother Thomas, though most contemporary records refer to him as John Wynn. By Welsh tradition, he might have been styled John ap David Lloyd, yet he adopted a fixed surname. The name "Wynn," derived from the North Welsh *Gwynn* ("white" or "fair-haired"), was sometimes associated with illegitimate sons, but John inherited Plas-yn-Yale from his father, confirming his legitimate status. His father, David Lloyd ap Ellis, was the last in this line to employ the traditional "ap" system, and it was John who established the fixed surname "Yale" for himself and his descendants.

Occupation and Property

John inherited Plas-yn-Yale from his father David ap Ellis.

John Yale's brother, Thomas Yale, LL.D., was Chancellor to Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury. In his will dated 1577, he left a sum of money to his brother John Yale.[3] This will is contemporary evidence that Thomas and John were brothers and therefore that John Yale and John Wynn were in fact the same person.

John Yale is sometimes referred to as a 'clerk'.[4] This usually meant he was an ordained minister or cleric of the Church of England, and it would imply a university education. However, no contemporary record of a clerical appointment or university attendance has been found.

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John Yale is documented as the father of a son by Agnes, daughter of John Lloyd, who was named David Lloyd, D.C.L., and later became known as Dr. David Yale. He was the progenitor of the Yales of Plas Grono and, ultimately, the Yales of America. *Powys Fadog* (Vol. V, p. 139) provides the authority for these statements regarding his parentage. However, John's brother Thomas took an unusually active role in David's upbringing and stewardship, leading some to speculate that Thomas may have been the boy's biological father, concealing the truth because of his position in the church. While this remains conjecture, it offers a plausible explanation why contemporary records do not indicate a marriage between Agnes and John Yale. See Thomas Yale, LL.D. for more information. Agnes's parents are not currently known.

After John Yale's death, his widow Elizabeth married "Sir Evan Lloyd, of Bodidris in Yale, knight banneret, married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Mostyn of Mostyn, Esq., and relict (widow) of John Wynn (Yale) of Boddanwyddog, Esq."[5] From this marriage, Elizabeth had two additional children, Sir John Lloyd and Catherine. Her second husband, Sir Evan Lloyd, was the son of John Lloyd, Sheriff of Denbighshire in 1551.

John Yale lived during the reign of King Henry VIII. In 1535, Wales was formally annexed into England, and Welshmen were treated as English under law. With the help of Thomas Cromwell, King Henry also abolished the authority of the Pope in his territories, declaring himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England[2]. By doing so, the Protestant religion flourished in England and Wales, and this set in motion religious strife that eventually led to the Yale immigration to America.

The timeline for John Yale requires a careful review. John's younger brother Thomas Yale is said to have been born 1526,[7] so John was born before 1525 or earlier. John's mother Gwenhwyfar was born around 1511. If John was born in 1525, his mother would have been 14 and his father 38. His wife Elizabeth would be 5 years younger than him. These dates are a stretch but not impossible. Although John Yale's father, David Lloyd ap Ellis, was about 38 at the time of John's birth, and his grandfather around 50 when David was born, these ages are plausible given inheritance practices in medieval Wales. As the seventh child of Ellis ap Griffith, David's father could easily have been older at his birth, and delays due to military service or waiting to assume estates often postponed marriages. Although birth and death dates in this era are approximate, they appear consistent with those of close ancestors and descendants.

There is a coat of arms assigned to John Yale of Plas-yn-Yale in *The History of Princes, the Lord Marcher, and the Ancient Nobility of Powys Fadog,*[4] but it is incorrect. See *The Yale Family Coat of Arms - Origin and History* in "Further Readings" for more information.

End of Life

John Yale's year of death is unknown, but we can infer that he died before 1577. In his will dated 1577, John Yale's brother, Thomas Yale, LL.D., "left a sum of money to his trustees for the repair of the old house at Yale. The money was to go to his brother, John Yale, if still alive, and although we assume that it did, it would appear that no major work was started here until some 40 or 50 years later, no doubt due to the national climate and uncertain times, making it difficult to attend to the happier business of home-making".[3] However, the work was not done because John Yale died well before 1577. It appears that John Yale's son Thomas inherited Plas-yn-Yale from his father in 1572, as recorded in the Denbighshire Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1572, cited by A.N. Palmer[8]. This suggests that John Yale died on or before 1572.

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Research Notes

Online Genealogy References:
WikiTree ID: Yale-79
FamilySearch ID: LBK7-6QQ

Further Reading:
- Yale, Max Brian. *Guide to the Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection*. *Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection.* 2025
- Yale, Max Brian. *Yale Family Coat of Arms* - Origin and History. *Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection*, 2025

References

1. Yale, Rodney Horace. *Yale Genealogy and History of Wales*. Beatrice, NE: Milburn & Scott, 1908. Ref no. 15 p. 80

2. Davies, John. *A History of Wales*, London, England: Penguin Press, 1990.

3. Sherratt, L. Gordon."Some Account of Plas-yn-Yale and the Yale Family", 1972 Manuscript

4. Lloyd, Jacob Youde William. The History of Princes, the Lord Marcher, and the Ancient Nobility of Powys Fadog. London, England: T.Richards, etc., 1885

5. Archaeologia Cambrensis Journal ser 3 v 15, London, England, 1869

6. Palmer, Alfred Neobard. A History of Country Townships of the Old Parish of Wrexham, Wrexham, Wales: Woodhall, etc., 1903

7. Dictionary of Welsh Biography: YALE family, of Plâs yn Iâl and Plas Grono Wrexham

8. Palmer, Alfred Neobard. History of the Thirteen Country Townships of the Old Parish of Wrexham. (Wrexham: 1903), p. 211

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